Strive for Allah in the Way He Deserves

Allah the Almighty commanded His worshippers to engage in jihad for His cause in the way He deserves when He said: "Strive for [the cause of] Allah in the way He deserves". Ibn 'Abbas interpreted this as: "to do this with the best of their ability, fearing the criticism of no one when striving for the cause of Allah". Herein lies the divine obligation for jihad in which the worshipper is not burdened with more than his abilities, even though there are those who will criticize and disapprove; a scene which is playing out in the affairs of the mujahidin today. Most people today oppose the mujahidin and criticize them because of the difficulties jihad may cause them as they pursue their selfish desires. Based upon this, Qur'anic verses were delivered commanding the mujahidin to pay no mind to, nor fear the criticism of anyone.

The Noble Qur'an asserted that for this, there will be a reward that Allah bestows only upon those whom He loves. The Almighty said: "O believers! Whoever among you abandons their faith, Allah will replace them with others who love Him and are loved by Him. They will be humble with the believers but firm towards the disbelievers, struggling in the Way of Allah; fearing no blame from anyone. This is the favor of Allah. He grants it to whoever He wills. And Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing". Allah followed this Ayah, saying: "Your only guardians are Allah, His Messenger, and fellow believers—who establish prayer and pay alms-tax with humility. Whoever allies themselves with Allah, His Messenger, and fellow believers, then it is certainly Allah's party that will prevail". It is thus no wonder that, nowadays, the mujahidin are mostly criticized for matters of enmity and loyalty, disavowal of the mushrikin and fighting them. All of which are necessary for striving in the cause of Allah as He deserves, an obligation carried forward only by the victorious party of Allah.

The more a Muslim strives to conduct his jihad in the way Allah deserves, the more people will go against him, abandon him and criticize him. Therefore, Allah said regarding the steadfast victorious party that: "They will not be harmed by those who turn their backs on them, unless Allah so commands" [Muslim].

Among the wondrous things that is narrated in the Sunnah is that: The Sahabah who preceded us to Islam used to pledge to the Prophet ﷺ to: "Not fear the criticism of anyone when striving in the cause of Allah!" Furthermore, 'Abbadah Bin al-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "We pledged to the Messenger of Allah to hear and obey during our hardship and our ease, when we felt energetic and when we felt tired, that we would not contend with the orders of whomever was entrusted with it, that we would stand for justice wherever we may be, and that we would not fear the blame of any blamer for the sake of Allah" [Al-Bukhari].

This surely means that speaking the truth and working for its cause is why there are many critics and blamers, and it would explain the indiscriminate war launched against the Islamic State, for it established its jihad upon the prophetic method, and its soldiers have sought the jihad that Allah deserves – and we do not praise anyone's merits in sight of Allah's true knowledge.

Herein lies the answer to those who assume that people disagree with the mujahidin because of their mistakes. Were the mujahidin of the past criticized and blamed because they made mistakes?! And did people turn their backs upon the victorious party, as mentioned in the Sunnah, because of its mistakes?! And do the Almighty's words - "they fear not the blame of blamers" – mean that this blame is caused by their mistakes?!

Ibn Kathir, in his interpretation, had this to say regarding the matter: "Struggling for the cause of Allah; fearing no blame from anyone" means that nothing will stop them from obeying Allah, fighting His enemies, applying His punishment, enjoining good and forbidding evil. No one, and nothing will deter them from it, and no one's blame or disapproval will make them stumble". Contemplate the words of Ibn Kathir. Do the mujahidin of today not embody these words, and live them, hour after hour? We seek help only from Allah.

Others have said: "And this points to the strength of their resolve; for he who is weak hearted is weak in resolve, loses his determination when blamers blame, and becomes feeble when faced with disapproval". No doubt, those holding on to their faith these days are like those grasping burning coal in the palm of their hand. No one is clutching on to their deen these days like the mujahidin who are holding their souls in their hands in support of this deen, in obedience to Allah the Almighty, and in defense of His Shari'ah. Ibn al-Qayyim said: "They are the ones truly clutching burning coal in their hands, and most, if not all, people criticize them".

The more time passes by, the stranger this deen becomes, and the more hypocrites and naysayers come out of their holes to criticize it. Ibn al-Qayyim described Islam's condition today, saying: "Islam is indeed the truth upon which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his companions lived by, and today, it is even stranger than when it first showed up. Even though, its icons and banners are well known and famous, Islam today is very strange, and its people are strangers, and are the most ostracized among people" [Madarij al-Salikin]. If these were the times of Ibn al-Qayyim, what can we say about our time today?!

As mentioned before, the mujahidin love to be steadfast on this path, despite the multitudes of haters, disapprovers and naysayers, who criticize their jihad and their call. For those who go down this blessed road know that it is fraught with difficulty, self-discipline, control, and perseverance in the face of tribulations; something which those slavish spirits, who love this dunya and hate death, cannot tolerate!

Those of us who study the Book of Allah the Almighty, find that Allah, the Exalted, commanded us to jihad for His cause as He deserves. He, the Exalted, commanded us to mind Him as He deserves when He said: "O believers! Be mindful of Allah in the way He deserves, and do not die except in [a state of full] submission [to Him]". In fact, He commanded us in this same verse to stay the course until we die in submission – upon Islam. This indicates that faith is the perseverance of a Muslim until he meets his Lord, and true jihad lies in steadfastness to it until a Muslim meets his Guardian.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said: "He commanded them to strive for His cause as He deserves, and to be mindful of Him as He deserves. The mindfulness He deserves is in obedience without defiance, being remembered and never forgotten, in being praised and never associated with anyone else. A jihad He deserves lies in the worshipper's full submission of his soul, his heart, his tongue, his love, and in disavowal of Shaytan and his promises. In these two types of strife, he rises with the power of dominance, and with tools by which to fight Allah's enemies, with his heart, his tongue, his hands and his wealth, so that Allah's word is raised high". He then said: "He who claims that the two verses are abrogated, is wrong when he claims that they included the command of doing only what can be tolerated. What He deserves in mindfulness and jihad is what a worshiper must tolerate" [Zad al-Ma'aad]. In Ibn al-Qayyim's previous words, the benefits of strife against Shaytan and one's desires, is that they aid in jihad against the kuffar.

After Allah commanded the believers to strive in jihad for His cause as He deserves, the Almighty said: "And laid upon you no hardship in the religion—the way of your forefather Ibrahim". Do you see how Allah combined between the jihad He deserves and between the way of Ibrahim (peace be upon him)? For this noble way that does not lay hardship upon us, is the same one that obligates us to strive against the kuffar and hypocrites, commands us to be harsh towards them, and fight them with every legitimate means. In this lies a message to those who want jihad without Shari'ah, or Shari'ah without jihad. Those who adopt this condition, are lost. Without jihad, Islam will not rise in this era, and jihad will have no value if its goal was not to establish Shari'ah. In fact, if it were not so, then it cannot be called jihad. However, most people do not know.